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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 175

By Westmoreland

A RESOLUTION To commend State Representative H. E. Bittle and Mr. Steve Lewis upon their receipt of a Tennessee Valley Authority Award recognizing their outstanding contributions in support of Tennessee's thriving river system.

WHEREAS, It is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those estimable Tennesseans who have dedicated themselves to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, H. E. Bittle and Steve Lewis are two such citizens who were presented with an award from the Tennessee Valley Authority at the meeting of the Melton Hill Lake Users Association on the 8th of March, 2001; and

WHEREAS, Representative Bittle, our worthy colleague who ably represents House District 14, and Mr. Lewis, an employee of Oak Ridge National Laboratory, have distinguished themselves as public-spirited citizens of the highest order and as exceptional assets to their community during their ten years of volunteer work in baselining the water quality properties of the Tennessee and Clinch Rivers and as founders of the Annual River Rescue; and

WHEREAS, The two men began Water Project/90s to test pH, temperature, turbidity, conductivity, bacterial counts, and dissolved oxygen on area waterways, first conducting these baseline tests on Melton Hill Lake in April of 1990; and

WHEREAS, from this auspicious beginning, Representative Bittle and his close friend and neighbor, Steve Lewis undertook the even more ambitious project of testing every mile of waterway in the entire State of Tennessee; they completed their statewide water quality testing project last year; and

WHEREAS, by conducting these water quality tests, Steve Lewis and H. E. Bittle were able to benchmark the specific water quality conditions on Tennessee's waterways, thus providing valuable information for future generations; and

WHEREAS, The original idea to test the waters of East Tennessee was derived when H. E. Bittle took his son to a stream to catch minnows for a fishing trip and realized that there were no minnows to be caught there; and

WHEREAS, Representative Bittle realized that the stream was dying and decided to take action; and

WHEREAS, The two environmentally-conscious men began the First Annual River Rescue on the 6th of April, 1991, enlisting the sponsorship of Wendy's, Pilot Oil, and Sea Ray Boats; and

WHEREAS, The Eleventh Annual River Rescue will be held on the 31st of March, 2001; this continuity offers proof of the astounding success of the program; and

WHEREAS, Since the initiation of the Annual River Rescue Program, hundreds of tons of trash have been removed from the lakes of Anderson and Knox counties; and

WHEREAS, H. E. Bittle's and Steve Lewis's remarkable success as environmental and civic leaders is directly attributable to their reliance on the time-honored values of hard work and common sense; and

WHEREAS, Representative H. E. Bittle and Mr. Steve Lewis are extremely giving individuals; most of the expenses for their clean-up and water quality projects have been paid from their own pockets; and

WHEREAS, As stated by John Croes, President of the Melton Hill Lake Users Association, "it is fitting for people such as Representative Bittle and Steve Lewis to get the

recognition they deserve for the many years of volunteer service they have given to East Tennessee to help make our waterways cleaner and safer for everyone"; and

WHEREAS, Representative Bittle and Mr. Lewis have now set their sights upon "another phase of their testing and benchmarking program with the goal to test every mile of every river east of the Rockies"; and

WHEREAS, H. E. Bittle and Steve Lewis are wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and they should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we hereby commend our most valued colleague, Representative H. E. Bittle, and Mr. Steve Lewis for their honorable and astute service to the good people of Tennessee via their many laudable projects to improve water quality and salute their unswerving commitment to environmental causes and living their lives according to the principles of altruism and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That appropriate copies of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copies.